

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Submitted by:

*Rice C. Leach, MD, Commissioner,
Department for Public Health*

It is nice to have the *Local Health Link* back on line. The last time I know I wrote anything for the Link was October 2001. That is a long time without a predictable way to keep each other informed.

I have had the chance to sit in meetings with Governor Fletcher, Lt. Governor Pence, Secretary Holsinger, and Undersecretary Birdwhistell. These men bring a new perspective to state government and the way it addresses health care issues. For starters, health care is right at the top...as a process to improve the economy and education...and not just as a financial or coverage problem to be addressed.

Governor Fletcher has mentioned his interest in prevention every time I have heard him speak. He talks about prevention in terms of preventing complications through good case management and in terms of preventing illness in the first place. His inaugural speech, his state of the state address, and his recent budget address all mention these activities prominently.

Lt. Governor Pence is in charge of a drug abuse summit that will pull together

prevention, education, treatment, and law enforcement aspects of this condition that is destroying so much of Kentucky's human capital. There have been other task forces and there have been other recommendations but this one is different. He has assigned the staff from the Department of Criminal Justice Training to staff the initiative, has identified funding to support the effort, has scheduled statewide meetings, and has made an effort to include many more disciplines. Finally, he has made it clear that this is not a study...it is an assignment to give the administration the best advice subject matter experts and citizens can generate so something can be done now. For more information on this important initiative, go to the website at: <http://kydrugsummit.ky.gov>.

Secretary Holsinger brings a career of experience in health care administration and practice. He is a cardiologist, a surgeon, and an anatomy professor...quite and achievement in itself. He has had just about every assignment a physician can have in the Department of Veterans Affairs facilities including being the director of all health care for veterans during President George Bush's (father) administration. He ran the VA hospital in Lexington and was Chancellor of the UK Medical Center. He has been a teacher, a provider, a third party payer, a recipient of third party programs, and fully understands how prevention and quality medical care can join to provide mass produced excellence.

Undersecretary Mark Birdwhistell has extensive experience in managing health care financing organizations. Many of you probably saw him in commercials for CHA before he joined state government. Those

of you who have been around a while will remember him as a leader in the state Medicaid program until he left in 1994 to work in the private sector. He knows this cabinet and its operational departments better than anyone can imagine...and that bodes well for public health.

What does all of this mean? Well, for one thing it means change. The change would have come because of the budget no matter who Governor Fletcher appointed to these positions but having leadership with so much direct care operational background is something DPH has not seen for many years. I expect to see significant change in how everyone in health care functions. I expect to see change that supports our working together as much as possible and change that will make it more difficult for any component of the system to go it alone. Remember, it really is all one canoe and there is no such thing as your side is leaking.

I expect to see challenges that will require the state and local public health system to adapt to a changing economic situation. "If Medicaid grows at the current rate and remains unmanaged it will provide neither quality health care nor remain sustainable for Kentucky." This is a direct quotation from the Governor's budget address. Making Medicaid into a managed quality health care system that is sustainable for Kentucky will drive all kinds of needed changes over time.

I expect to see lots of opportunities to seek out partners to help public health achieve its mission and...I see all kinds of requirements for public health to become partners with others as together all of us pull together to turn the existing health

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care system into one where it is clear to everyone that in Kentucky 1+1=3 when it comes to health care.

It will be a challenge for everyone but at the end of the day, the investment will be worth it because it will be our contribution to a Kentucky ready for the new world economy.

LABORATORY

Packaging and Shipping of Diagnostic Specimens

Due to recent DOT (Dept. of Transportation) rule changes there has been quite a bit of confusion surrounding what local health departments and other medical facilities must do to ensure the safety of the public and assure the integrity of the clinical sample. We would like to explain how best to send your diagnostic specimens to the Kentucky Public Health Laboratory (KPHL).

First of all, what are diagnostic specimens? According to the regulation (DOT 49 CFR) a diagnostic specimen is defined as "any human or animal material, including excreta, blood and its components, tissue, and tissue fluids being transported for diagnostic or investigational purposes, but excluding live infected humans or animals." Therefore >99 % of all clinical specimens from the local health departments should be treated as diagnostic.

Now for some details.

Proper packaging of diagnostic specimens includes four basic requirements:

- Watertight Primary Containers
- Watertight Secondary Containers
- Absorbent Material
- Sturdy Outer Packaging

Watertight primary containers may be glass, metal, or plastic. They must not contain more than 500 ml of any liquid. For solid specimens the primary container must be siftproof and not contain more than 500g.

Examples: Chlamydia swabs and Vacutainers®.

Watertight secondary containers. To prevent contact between multiple primary containers, individually wrap or separate each with paper towels or tube sleeves and place inside a leakproof secondary container. **Note:** Paperwork goes between secondary container and outer packaging. Make sure black rubber gaskets have been placed inside the metal canister lid.

Examples: Small metal canisters and plastic canisters.

Absorbent material. Place absorbent material between the primary and secondary container. Use enough absorbent material to absorb the entire contents of all primary containers.

Examples: Cotton balls, paper towels, absorbent pads.

Sturdy Outer Packaging must consist of corrugated fiberboard, wood, metal, or rigid plastic. For liquids the outer packaging must not contain a total of more than 4 liters. For solids, the outer packaging must not contain a total of more than 4 kg. The minimum package size in the smallest overall external dimension is 4 inches. Each completed package must be capable of withstanding a 4 foot drop test outlined in IATA 6.5.1.

Markings. Each diagnostic shipment must show the text "DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMENS".

Diagnostic Specimens that are Dried and Non-infectious. Dried blood, tissue, saliva, and hair. Dried blood samples on absorbent pads or cards for diagnostic testing must be enclosed in a paper envelope or a paper lunch sack and mailed in a second paper envelope. Do not fold cards and if more than one card is submitted, be sure to turn so blood spots do not touch one another. Make sure spots are dried thoroughly before placing the cards in the envelopes. Glass or plastic slides must not be shipped in any flexible envelope.

Do's and Don'ts

Do call us if in doubt. 502-564-4446 ext. 4407.

Do use the correct packaging components.

Do not place the paperwork around the primary container (i.e. the glass or plastic vial).

Do place the paperwork between the secondary container and the outer packaging.

Do try to keep the use of tape on the tubes, cans and boxes to a minimum.

The employees of the KPHL appreciate the efforts of all the LHDs in safely collecting and shipping your patient's clinical samples to the lab.

Submitted by:

Peggy Ellis and Leigh Ann Bates

LocalOPs

Please update your email address book as the Division of Local Health Department Operations along with state government is undergoing a change of email address. The state government email address change is firstname.lastname@ky.gov. The Division Director's new address is bettyh.olinger@ky.gov - Please **note** the added "H."

As a result of the renovation of the building, Division staff was relocated. While the Division is still in the same general location, new mail stops were assigned as follows:

Division Office:	HS1W-E
Training:	HS1W-E
Personnel:	HS1W-D
Nursing:	HS1W-B
Support:	HS1W-B

UPDATES:

The Bioterrorism statewide curriculum matrix is near completion. Each Focus Area leader is actively involved in providing the necessary information to ensure accuracy of data.

DPH is pleased to host a guest from Puerto Rico, Jennifer Schlesinger, Focus

G Public Health Training Specialist, February 18-27. Kentucky was recommended to her as a model for BT Preparedness Focus G Workplan. Jennifer will have the opportunity to talk w/ each Focus Leaders to gain insight into BT Preparedness and will attend the Incident Command Training in Lexington during the week of February 23.

A New Directors' Orientation will be held at DPH, February 9 and 10. If any "not so new" Directors wish to participate, please contact Beverly Stone.

DPH has established a Title VI Workgroup to complete the Title VI Compliance plan by June 30, 2004. Paul Royce was named the DPH Title VI coordinator. The DPH Workgroup consists of representatives from LHDs as well as KPHLI scholars, whose project entails Title VI and the LHDs. Local Health Departments will also be required to complete a Title VI Compliance Plan by June 30, 2004. More information will be forthcoming.

Submitted by:
Betty H. Olinger, Ed.D. Director
Local Health Department Operations

EPSDT Outreach Update

Local Health Departments have made great strides in improving their EPSDT Outreach. Last year's total number of 83,267 participants has been surpassed the first 6 months of this year with 147,090 participants already receiving outreach activities. Recent re-allocation of EPSDT Outreach funds should enable LHDs to increase activities for the remainder of this year. Modification of allocations for next year, according to requests to provide more services, will also help LHDs to outreach more children to have their EPSDT Screenings. THANKS and KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!!

- Submitted by:
Linda Burke, Nursing Branch Manager

Local Personnel

The Local Personnel Branch staff will be concentrating efforts on the review and

updating various job descriptions in the Classification Plan and amending the administrative regulations that govern the personnel program for local health departments. It is imperative to bring the job descriptions in line with changes in duties and responsibilities of local health department employees. Employee compensation must better reflect the increased job responsibilities and competencies of employees during their tenure in public health. In addition, the employee evaluation process needs to be more objective in the evaluation and rewarding of employees for their level of performance in carrying out job responsibilities according to standards. The staff will seek local health department input as they employ these efforts will help to bring about needed changes to the merit system.

Submitted by:
Robert Nelson, Personnel Branch Manager

Training Tidbits

Education and Training Upcoming Courses

FEBRUARY

- *4th KIDS's SMILES, Prestonsburg
- 3rd Coordinated School Health: Fitting the Pieces Together, Hazard
- 4th & 5th KPHLI (Public Health Leadership Institute), Mt. Olivet
- 10th Coordinated School Health, Princeton
- *12th Disaster Preparedness for School Health Nurses, Frankfort
- 19th Coordinated School Health, Lexington
- 20th Beyond Nutrition Counseling Reframing the Battle Against Obesity Bowling Green
- 24th, 25th, & 26th Midwest Academy Direct Action Organizing – Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program, Louisville

MARCH

- *5th & 6th Public Health Nursing Leadership Series, Lexington

*Note: See DPH Training Calendar for course details.

Submitted by:
Eula Spears, Manager Training Branch

Plan & Budget Trainings (1 ½ day trainings)

February

- 24th & 25th, Paducah @ Executive Inn
- 26th & 27th, Bowling Green @ Drury Inn

March

- 2nd & 3rd, Somerset @ Lake Cumberland District Office
- 4th & 5th, Grayson @ Super 8
- 9th & 10th, Florence @ AmeriSuites
- 17th & 18th, Frankfort @ DPH Auditorium

Coding & Billing Trainings (1 ½ day trainings)

May

- 25th & 26th, Paducah @ Executive Inn
- 27th & 28th, Bowling Green @ Holiday Inn University Plaza

June

- 3rd & 4th, Somerset @ Center for Rural Development
- 10th & 11th, London @ London Community Center
- 17th & 18th, Paintsville @ Ramada Inn
- 21st & 22nd, Louisville @ Executive West
- 24th & 25th, Frankfort @ DPH Auditorium

Submitted by:
Libby Sammons, Support Branch Manager

PHPS PASSAGE

The Division of Public Health Protection & Safety along with state government are undergoing a change of email address. The state government email address change is firstname.lastname@ky.gov. Please update your records as this change has begun to be implemented. The Division recently was moved to a new location of the CHR building. The Division is now located on the first floor of the Health Service Building. Our address is still 275 East Main Street, however, new mail stops were assigned to each Branch as follows:

Division Office: HS1EB
 Food Safety: HS1CF
 Milk Safety: HS1CB
 Radiation Branch: HS1CA
 Environmental Management: HS1CD

Guy F. Delius - Acting Division Director

The Food Safety Branch has made significant accomplishments despite the shortage of personnel. These accomplishments include: Farmers Market Regulation - In cooperation with our partners, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and the Kentucky Farm Bureau, a Farmers Market Regulation was enacted that provides Kentucky farmers an opportunity to market their products at Farmers Markets, from the farm, or at Certified Roadside Stands. This program has been a tremendous success with 80 Home-Based Processors Registered; 71 Home-Based Microprocessors trained; and 1 Microprocessor Certified. It is anticipated that all 70 trained Microprocessors will become certified during the next growing season. The UK Cooperative Extension Service has scheduled four additional training sessions for Microprocessors. Interested farmers should contact Dr. Sandra Bastin at 859/257-1812.

Tattoo Regulation and Body Piercing Regulation - The Tattoo Regulation and the Body Piercing Regulation have both been passed by the LRC Health and Welfare Committee. In the near future, a statewide news release will be issued conveying this information to both business entities and the general public. Plans are also underway to hold a one-day training session for local health department environmentalists that will be conducting inspections of these facilities. A uniform date will be established to implement these programs.

The Environmental Lead Program (ELP) has a new administrator who was put into place in May, 2003, Mr. Kenny Ratliff. Along with the staffing changes, the entire office was re-located to a different area within the Health Services Building. Central office staff is now found in the center wing of the first floor. Partnerships

are being entered into to give more strength to removing lead in residential settings. The goal is to create homes that have had childhood lead exposure removed. What will this mean to the local health departments? Due to the number of staff in the ELP, a better system for reaching the entire state is being developed. Based on census data, populations, housing stock, and other relevant factors, a regional approach is being built. A commitment of one environmentalist, financially backed by the ELP, will cover a region for performing lead services, as needed. This will also provide a point of contact between the central office and local health departments for a better flow of information. It will allow a better checks and balances system to insure that no child with an elevated lead level will miss out on health services.

The Radiation Health & Toxic Agents Branch works to ensure the safe and proper use of radioactive material and radiation generating devices throughout Kentucky. This proper and safe use applies to byproduct radioactive materials from nuclear reactors, accelerator generated radioactive material, operation of X-ray equipment, CT Scans, Mammography and even radioactive material which occurs naturally in Kentucky. Whether the radioactive material or generating device is produced in Kentucky, shipped to authorized users in Kentucky, installed health care equipment or transported across the state, the Radiation Health & Toxic Agents Branch provides administrative regulations and programmatic oversight to ensure safe and proper use of radioactive material or radiation generating devices.

The Milk Safety Branch regularly inspects dairy farms in Kentucky, all milk trucks, all dairy-processing facilities and certifies all persons in Kentucky responsible for collecting, sampling, and handling raw milk. Our office staff maintains records for enforcement of laboratory analysis of raw milk and finished dairy products. The Milk Safety Branch conducts regular milk sanitation ratings to allow interstate shipment of milk and dairy products.

The Environmental Management Branch establishes sanitary standards for the

operation of regulated public facilities and on-site sewage disposal. Resources are directed primarily at providing training and technical assistance to local health departments. Radon and Consumer Product Safety awareness are promoted through public outreach. National Poison Prevention Week will be observed March 21 - 27, 2004. Planning kits are available. Training for Provisional Certification of Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems Inspectors will be offered in three separate sessions for 2004. The first session will begin with Soils I on March 9-12, Phase I March 15-19, and Phase II May 4-7. The 2nd Session: Soils I May 11-14, Phase I June 21-25, and Phase II August 9-13. The 3rd Session: Soils I August 30-September 2, Phase I September 29-October 1, and Phase II November 15-19. General Sanitation Core Training is being offered April 19-23, 2004. To order a Poison Prevention Planning kit or sign up for training, please contact this branch at 502/564-4856 Ext. 3730.

The Division of Public Health Protection and Safety's mission both at present and in the future is to protect the health and well being of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Submitted by:
 Guy Delius, Acting PHPS Director

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please submit articles, state/local staff spotlight nominees, or suggestions for the Local Health Link to:

Betty H. Olinger, Ed.D., Director
 LHDO

275 East Main Street, HS1W-E
 Frankfort, KY 40621

E-mail: bettyh.olinger@ky.gov
 502-564-4990 or 502-564-2556 (FAX)

Format Editor: Debbie Bohannon